I had a question. What's your connection again, to MACBA? Is this the same MACBA? So I had a show at Centre de Art in Barcelona on Las Ramblas. Sorry, Santa Monica, the art center of Santa Monica is how I would say it in English. So is that connected to MACBA? I think that it is somehow. Oh, right. Yes. That's the connection. The connection is Sonar. Wow. That's a long time ago. That's like 1998 or something. We're all older.

Okay. So let me stop you right there. Objects have very special meaning in my work, because I'm primarily a software architect by profession. I spent 35 years as a professional programmer and software designer and systems architect. So in my world, objects have a very different meaning than they do for most people. But so are you positing objects as the opposite of virtual?

Interesting. What an object is. But this is really way outside the field of art. This is epistemology or, I mean we're into philosophy.

Okay. Okay. So, so I, I think I'm following, but I have to warn you. This is about to get really messy. Okay. Because my work is by now big enough. I mean, I've been making art in the public sphere at least since 1992. That's a long time. And so my work is now big enough and complicated enough that we can't even possibly hope to cover it all in one hour. That's just not going to happen. So we need to focus on some particular aspect of my work. I mean, obviously my work is not limited. Well, not obviously my work is not limited only to the Church of Euthanasia. That's just the work that I'm known best for. But you know, then there's my work in the field of polymeter and developing software for composing music. There's my work in virtual reality, for example, PotterDraw though technically the polymeter music composition is an extension of my work in virtual reality as well.

Almost all of my art is digital or virtual, except for the performance art, but then there's other work that is not so obvious. I mean, obviously, you know, you know, by now, you know, that I wrote a magazine, but I also had an important blog, called Metadelusion, which, you know, it didn't really get that much attention, but Metadelusion is absolutely critical to the discussion we're about to have, because Metadelusion is essentially the seed of "A Thin Layer of Early Rock," which is the foundation of "Apologize to the Future," the album that I just released earlier this year. And so it's absolutely fair to say that I have strong opinions about what an object is or isn't, and that that's totally relevant to the discussion all of humanity is now having about whether reality is real, which is going to be probably the single prime determinant of whether humanity actually survives.

Right. But the point I'm making is that the critical issue at hand, even if we just put aside Donald Trump and the assault on reality that's taking place in the United States, globally, without that, I think it's fair to say that humanity is at a critical juncture, and that increasingly scientists are not merely complaining or even becoming upset. They are shouting loudly, screaming even, in the public sphere and saying things like "we've been saying this for 25 years and you haven't listened and it's about to become too late." Scientists are breaking down in tears, on television. And this is not something that scientists normally do. I can tell you, I know a lot of scientists, I worked with scientists over my entire career, and when you're an engineer, you normally work with scientists, with material scientists, chemists, physicists, mechanical people and many others, mathematicians.

It's just normal. You have contact with scientists. And so I can tell you, scientists are normally very sober, very understated. They tend not to like wild claims. They tend to be if anything, very reticent and they tend to be conservative in their assumptions. So when scientists start screaming and breaking down in tears, you better believe we have a fire on deck and the ship is in big trouble. You know, this is the situation. And so I feel that while it would be interesting to discuss things like the influence of Thomas Wilfred on my polymeter art and many other arcane topics, that in fact, the elephant in the room is "Apologize to the Future," which is the latest phase of the Church of Euthanasia's now 25-year attempt to bring the real possibility of human extinction into the public consciousness.

So I've been at this a long time, and you can argue that the Church of Euthanasia's campaign has been an epic failure, and I would agree with you. During the existence of the Church of Euthanasia, the human population increased by a third. So nobody's going to point to us and say that we were a successful antinatalist movement, but that wasn't really the goal. And I don't think that's the right way to judge or view the Church of Euthanasia's effort. The Church of Euthanasia's effort primarily has been to bring the real possibility of human extinction into human consciousness, in other words, to make extinction a household word. And I think that we've largely been successful at that, and that in the early nineties when we started, human extinction was an extremely fringe concept, it was not discussed in mainstream media.

It was barely discussed in underground media. It was really considered—even climate change, for example, and the possibility of a drastic climate shift, in line with what's happened in earlier geological epochs—was considered a fringe theory and not widely discussed outside of climate science circles, but today that's not the case. Today, there's a lot of discussion of antihumanism, of antinatalism, of the real possibility of human extinction, and of the real possibility of drastic climate shifts within the lifetimes of the people who are alive today. And so that's what "Apologize to the Future" is actually about. It's about not only the possibility of all this happening, but what it will look like in the future after it's happened.

Gladly, that's easy. I will gladly do that. That's actually the thing that needs to be done. So "A Thin Layer of Oily Rock" is the opening track of the album, "Apologize to the Future," and it sets the stage for what follows. Almost the very first line of "A Thin Layer of Oily Rock" is "Footsteps on the moon / It's really out there." And that is a reference to a famous possibly apocryphal, but probably real quote from Albert Einstein. It was sort of in the category of an infamous quip. He said, probably in German, "The moon is really out there." It's a very ambiguous statement, but what he meant is that the moon is out there physically, whether you believe in it or not. And so in philosophy, we would say that this is a statement not only of realism, and of empiricism to some extent too, but more importantly, this is a statement of scientific pragmatism.

I am a scientific pragmatist. It took me a long time to discover this and Metadelusion, the blog I mentioned earlier, chronicles the long history of my discovering this about myself. Scientific pragmatism is an important category of the philosophy of science. I would argue possibly the most important category in the whole complex web of the philosophy of science, because essentially what scientific pragmatism says is that we need to spend less time arguing about whether reality is real, and counting angels on the heads of pins, because we have urgent problems that need solving in reality. And so instead of counting angels on the heads of pins, scientists should spend their time trying to solve the real problems that confront humanity, for the simple reason that reality is big and complicated and

potentially lethal and moving fast. And so there's a real possibility that if we don't make our explanations of phenomena more predictive in a hurry, reality is going to get the better of us, and pretty soon we'll be gone.

Oh, "A Thin Layer of Oily Rock. Yes. So the analogy is actually a reference to paleontology. So, if you read much paleontology you'll know that the worst extinction that's happened thus far on Earth is sometimes called the Permian Triassic extinction boundary. And you can look that one up in Wikipedia, but that one was, as you might say, super bad, it basically exterminated nearly all life in the oceans and most life on land, very few lifeforms survived it. So for example, on land, there was really only one significant animal, let's say something like a large animal with four legs, that actually survived it. And so we're all relatives of that animal. It's called a Lystrosaurus I believe, a pretty strange-looking thing. And so that's how severe the filter was. In other words, basically life went through a kind of filter at that time.

And it was, how to say, this was just within the range of natural variation on Earth. This is just within the range of what can happen when Earth is left to its own devices, without an allegedly intelligent species actively interfering with the climate of the planet. Right? So it suggests that, as some famous scientist said recently, climate is a dangerous beast and we're sticking a stick into it and poking it, right? And so it was dangerous enough already, but with humans poking it, it's capable of doing even more crazy stuff, and so we can reasonably expect that if we continue to accelerate the entropy of our environment, that something like the Permian Triassic extinction will eventually happen. And it won't happen all at once, but the point is that it can easily be a situation where it can start to happen and become irreversible.

So many Earth processes are like this. These are the so-called tipping points, meaning they develop essentially inertia of their own. And so it could easily be imagined that at some point in the future, humanity could feel super sad and sorry, and say, okay, okay, we get it, we get it now. We're not going to emit any more fossil carbon. That was a terrible idea. We're going to shape up and, drastically reduce our population, and reduce our consumption, and start living within limits, and all that good stuff that the Republicans say we'll never, ever, ever do, because Jesus doesn't want us to, but you know what, by then it'll be too late is the point. It can easily be, for example, if we significantly melt the permafrost, that the amount of gasses released by that—both carbon dioxide and methane—are so huge that at that point, they dwarf the amount of gases that humanity can output.

And so increasingly it won't matter what humanity does. And so that's the lesson of the thin layer of oily rock, is that all of the life that existed—and there was a lot of it at the time that the Permian Triassic extinction happened—was reduced to what looks like, if you're a paleontologist and you go looking in the right geological specimens, you basically just see this kind of black line. It's not very wide, it's considerably less than a meter. It's more like a third of a meter or something. It's quite narrow. It's just this long line of compressed greasy rock. And what that is, is the crushed up remains of everything that died. And that's what will remain of us, if we fuck this up, is the point. That's what all of humanity's hopes and dreams and knowledge and accomplishments and aspirations, all of that will be reduced to a thin layer of oily rock, if we can't manage to get through this bottleneck that we're currently passing through.

No, that's a total misunderstanding. That just results from a drastic misunderstanding of climate science. So, in fact, if you study climate science, and study what scientists have written, you'll quickly discover

that Earth is capable of much more inhospitable conditions than we're currently experiencing. What we're currently experiencing amounts to something like an inconvenience. It's inconvenient when property owners in Miami find that their buildings are partially underwater. Katrina killed a bunch of people, but by comparison to what Earth is capable of, it's an inconvenience. If you melted all of the ice—and by the way, that has happened in the history of Earth without any assistance from humans in the past, we've had an ice free planet where there were giant reptiles where the Arctic Circle is now—so if you melt all the ice, basically every coastline on Earth is submerged.

And so it was not an [exaggeration] when Peter Ward, the famous paleontologist who wrote "Under a Green Sky," said that humanity shouldn't worry so much about escaping to exoplanets because we're going to be too busy moving our airports. This really set me back when I understood what he meant. The point is, what percentage would you guess of the airports that humanity has built for itself, are at sea level? It's not actually an easy thing to look up. If you type that in Wikipedia, you don't necessarily get an answer, but you can form an approximation pretty quickly by looking at maps and figuring out where all the cities are. And it begs the question, why are so many cities built at sea level? And the answer to that is that cities were built at sea level because at the time when most cities evolved, boats were the only means of international transport.

And so it was necessary for trade reasons and for supply reasons to build cities at sea level. In fact, the only major cities that were inland prior to the modern era, were at the ends of or along major rivers, where it was possible to get boats up river. So this is just a fact, that the entire infrastructure of humanity is assuming a fixed sea level, but that's not the case. That's not what's coming. In fact we've already essentially guaranteed that that won't be the case. The problem is that it evolves over a very long time period, and we're continuing to accelerate the situation while it's evolving. And so this is the thing, what people I think don't really get unless they have a background in science, is that it's hard for humanity to comprehend geological timescales.

Most humans only think about what happens during their own lifetime. And generally even only within a small subset of that. So people think perhaps five or ten years into the future, or they think about the past, but through rose-colored glasses. And this is the basis of a very important and famous effect that was discovered, about a decade ago, by Daniel Pauly and Jeremy Jackson, who were both marine biologists. And so they discovered something that they call the shifting baseline effect, which is absolutely crucial to understanding what's happened to humanity. The shifting baseline effect basically says that human beings tend to assume that whatever level of biological diversity they witnessed during their childhood, during their formative years, is the same level of biological diversity that's always existed. And the problem with that is, it's an easy enough assumption to make, but it's totally mistaken.

It's absolutely wrong. And so this is how we can arrive at a situation where the nations of the world are having this big international discussion over fishing rights and who should be allocated how much of the various fish. But the problem is that what you don't see because of shifting baselines is that they're arguing over the last few percent of the fish that used to exist in the ocean. That more than 90% of all the biological diversity in the ocean was destroyed long ago. Nobody can see this because it's not directly visible. You have to actually look for the evidence of that. So if you do look, you'll be quite shocked by what you find. The first time I found it was in a book called "Cod," which is a nonfiction book

about the history of cod fishing in Massachusetts. And so they explored the allegation which was made at that time that you could walk to shore on the backs of cod.

Now cod are pretty big fish, but it's hard to picture anybody actually walking to shore. And so at the time I thought that was just hyperbole. But then I did more research and later what I found is that it is absolutely true that at that time, the cod were so plentiful in Massachusetts Bay that you could fish using a basket. You didn't need any other equipment. You could just go out there with a boat and a basket and stick the basket in the water and bring in these enormous fish. And I later found even more bizarre evidence. So they described at that time that the water was boiling with fish. And I thought, again, that that was hyperbole. But later I found a photograph of the same phenomenon, a very old photograph from the Gulf of Mexico showing the exact same phenomenon where the water was literally boiling, because there was so much biological diversity in it. And that's all long gone. That's from the past. Humanity's mostly fished out the ocean. And so what this shows is a larger societal problem. The larger societal problem is that humanity is not well-evolved—or not well-shaped by the forces of evolution that have acted on us in our original environment—to manage threats that evolve over very long time periods. We're primarily optimized to manage immediate threats.

Yeah. Essentially humanity has to become aware that it's capable of failing, but it's deeper than that. The deeper realization is that, so there's an important book we should bring up, called "Earth in Human Hands." It was written by a guy who worked for NASA his whole life as a planetary biologist, meaning he's essentially doing biology, studying the biology of worlds that we'll never see, and we have never seen. He's an exoplanet biologist. It sounds sort of wacky. You think, how can you study planets that we don't know anything about, but you can, there's a lot we can learn about the universe from careful study. And so he came to some conclusions which are closely related to the Drake equations, which govern basically how likely it is that there are other Earth-like planets elsewhere in the universe, in the vastness of the universe, with similarly intelligent species of some kind on them.

According to the Drake equations, basically the answer is it's very likely that our scenario has played out countless times throughout the universe. And there's a famous paradox that explains why we don't have any direct evidence of that, why we haven't been visited by intelligent life from other worlds. It's called Fermi's Paradox. It's a very glum paradox. What it basically says is that the fundamental problem is that by the time a species becomes as intelligent as we're in the process of becoming—or let's not use the word intelligence, because intelligence is complicated, let's just say powerful, as in capable of sending radio signals over vast distances and so on—that by the time a species has become that powerful, it's likely on the threshold of self-annihilation. Meaning it's likely having an awesome party and destroying its entire resource base and destroying its ecosystems or whatever else allowed it to get that far.

And so that's a paradox. It's a problem because it leads to the situation where, essentially just at the moment where something becomes powerful enough to transmit radio signals and potentially travel on an interstellar basis, it's just about to disappear. And so the odds of its little blaze of glory lining up with our little blaze of glory, wind up being essentially zero, despite the fact that these blazes have occurred, all throughout the history of the universe. So the flip side of this paradox, however, is that the opposite is also possible. It's possible for a lifeform to get through the bottleneck and become a long-lived species. But the trick is that in order to do that, it's just baked into the definition that that lifeform will have to have prioritized its long-term survival above all else, which is the thing that we are currently

absolutely incapable of doing. And so that's the real leap that humanity has yet to make. Humanity has yet to actually agree that the goal of paramount importance to everyone living today is our future survival. There's not widespread agreement about that. Not even close. In fact, probably, something like half of the world's population would say if you pressed them, that that's not really an important goal because we're all going to heaven.

Of course it's possible. It's just, this is not a question of whether it's possible. It's a question of whether it's likely, and right now I have to say, it's not looking bloody likely. And so I've spent my whole life trying to make it more likely, through my art and my political and personal communications. I have tried to tip the scales in favor of educating people and making it more likely that they can grasp the seriousness and the significance of what's happened here. The point is that if it weren't for humanity, there would be nothing to discuss about Earth. Earth wouldn't be special. If this were just planet of dolphins, or planet of squirrels or whatever, there would be no story to tell. It is humanity's story that makes the history of Earth worth knowing and telling and discussing. And so to the extent that humans destroy themselves and become absent from Earth, then the story is really over here.

It's possible of course that the giant reptiles or whatever else it is that follows us, could re-evolve back into something like us. But there's no guarantee of that. In fact, the odds aren't particularly good. It's complicated anyway, it could take a long time. And in any case, it wouldn't concern us. It's long beyond our time horizon. So the point is that at the moment we face an existential crisis. Meaning, to the extent that there is any meaning in existence, it comes from us. We generate it. We are obliged to generate meaning for ourselves. And if that meaning turns out to be that we should allow certain individuals to become immensely wealthy and powerful, and basically enslave all of the rest of us, so that they can have idyllic lives, where they have their every want and desire immediately fulfilled, and essentially live like pharaohs in ancient Egypt, if that's the goal, if that's what we all agree our society should look like, then actually we don't need to change anything. We have the perfect systems of government in place for achieving that outcome. That's what neoliberalism does. Neoliberalism maximizes that outcome, the outcome of maximal inequality, where the vast majority of Earth's resources and benefits are accrued in the smallest possible number of hands. So if we want Jeff Bezos to rule the world, and guys like him, then we have exactly the right systems and the whole thing is set up perfectly. And the only downside to this is—other than the fact that lots of people will be immiserated and die horrible, miserable deaths that could have been avoided—the only downside is that the experiment will be very short. It'll be a short epic party for the few. And then the experiment will be over and humanity won't be around, and it'll be giant reptiles or whatever comes next.

By the way, I'm not exaggerating when I bring up giant reptiles. The type of climate that humanity seems hell-bent on making on Earth generally does not favor mammals. If you know your paleontology and your history of Earth, you know that very hot, very humid climates are actually prejudicial against mammals and prejudicial for reptiles, because reptiles have a very different method of controlling their temperature than we do. They actually can't really thrive without a super-hot humid environment. And if you think about it, you'll understand that. If you've seen a snake or a lizard sunning itself on a rock, that's not for no reason, that's critical to their whole survival system. So if we build a world that is extremely hot and extremely humid, we can expect it to be dominated by giant reptiles. And there's a certain justice in that actually, because you could make a case that of all lifeforms that humanity has oppressed—and we've oppressed them all—we've oppressed reptiles especially hard.

We've really had it in for reptiles. We fucked up their world beyond recognition. And so there'll be some poetic justice in this. But none of this matters, of course. If humanity isn't around, there is no justice, poetic or otherwise. Justice really only exists for humans and in the minds of humans. And so this is really the point that I'm trying to make here, is that all of this is strictly a human thing. The universe is completely indifferent to our fate. This is the essence of existentialism after all, is perceiving that out there in the icy universe, there's nothing. It's cold. Most of it is dark and empty. If you went out there, there's nothing out there that's of any use to you. In fact, you would be killed instantly.

People often talk about how we're going to escape to other planets and so on, and I just laugh, because people who aren't actually involved in the business of space exploration and astronomy have very little firm grasp of how lethal space actually is. It's extremely difficult even to make computers that can survive space. You'd be surprised how many of our satellites and other machines we send into space are destroyed just by the radiation. And so, in fact, it's just ludicrous to imagine that we're going anywhere. We're not going anywhere. We [can] make our stand, and survive a bit longer here on Earth, and even that is time-limited. Ultimately the sun will become a red giant, and if we haven't managed to escape from Earth by then, we'll be fucked, but that's very far in the future. That's a billion years or more into the future. And so we could last a lot longer here on Earth, and for all we know have a very interesting time and do heroic, wonderful things that we can't imagine right now, or the experiment could be over and we're gone, but either way the universe is absolutely indifferent to it. And so it's really only of importance to us.

Yes, it has. That's right. I'm no longer really a big champion of wild nature. In fact, I think that people really misunderstood something deep about the Church of Euthanasia. The most important thing that they misunderstood was that "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself" is actually, well you could say it's a joke, in a way it's really more of a Zen koan. It's an absurd, nonsensical statement. And the reason it's absurd is because the planet actually isn't in any danger. We're in no danger of killing the planet. We couldn't do it if we wanted to. We could set off all of our hydrogen bombs at once, and still bacteria and many insects would survive and ultimately evolve into something else. And so it's not within our range of options to kill the planet. However, it's very much within our range of options to destroy ourselves. And so what I mean to say is that the most endangered species on Earth is civilization. Human civilization. This was always the point of "Save the Planet, Kill Yourself."

It was a way to show that our position is absurd, that we're sabotaging ourselves ultimately. And that's only of interest to us. That ultimately if we sabotage ourselves, then we have no one to blame but ourselves. The very fact that humans are capable of not destroying their own future, the very fact that human beings can even—in theory, at least—be made aware of the real possibility that we're going to make ourselves extinct, this unavoidably creates some ethical pressure for us to not do that stupid thing. If we were completely unaware, I mean, suppose we were like bacteria, and we somehow caused our own destruction, that's totally possible. In fact, that's the norm in evolution. 99% of every species that has ever evolved on Earth is now gone for one reason or another, but not out of willful self-destruction.

Most life forms are basically like very clever, complicated-behaving machines in the sense that they can do a thing, they have evolved to exploit a particular degree of freedom or a particular environmental benefit. And so they do that and eventually it can be that that environmental benefit just changes or something else comes along that can exploit it even better. And so then the original species goes extinct.

But our situation is not that at all. We have completely re-engineered Earth's systems to suit ourselves. Almost all of Earth's land surface that's capable of supporting life is now redirected towards either us directly, or towards our domesticated animals. We're behaving like a virus. We've infected Earth, and we've completely taken it over and converted it to our own use. And so we have no excuse. If we do that and then basically destroy ourselves in the process, who are we supposed to blame except ourselves? It makes no sense.

They definitely no longer apply. It's much too late for all that. That made sense back in the nineties when human extinction and climate change were still very new ideas. As I said previously, these were long shots and it was understandable that people snickered when we talked about them, but today nobody's snickering, except maybe in the land of the orange one. Maybe [Trump's] followers might snicker, but we can't be concerned about that. Rational, educated people, no longer snicker when you discuss climate change and human extinction. It's all too obvious actually that it's become a real threat and that we're increasingly napping our way to oblivion. And so in fact, the tactics have to change. It's too late for arch tactics. It's too late for black humor and irony and sarcasm. It's necessary now to tell it like it is. "Apologize to the Future" was my attempt to tell it like it is, plain and simple.

This is what will happen. This is how we will look to future generations. If they are lucky, or shall we say unlucky enough to exist. The essence of the "Apologize to the Future" project is visualizing the present from the point of view of the hypothetical future, in which we have made a mess of Earth completely. And our descendants, our own children, I don't have any, but you may, your own descendants are sort of picking through the rubble. You understand, picking through the rubble. How will they regard us? Probably not as heroes would be my guess. My hypothesis that I make on this record is that future generations will take a dim view of our actions.

Oh, but this is just beside the point. I'm sorry, but I really don't agree about this. Look, I mean, every time this comes up, I always want to say, I know people who grew up under the GDR, you know, the German Democratic Republic. I've met people who grew up even in Soviet Russia. And I can tell you, this was not any more likely to lead to a happy outcome. It just wasn't. Even the Unabomber pointed this out. Not that I agree with him necessarily, but he pointed out that what we're really talking about here is industrialism. Humanity has had the idea that there should be no limits to growth. That's an idea. It happens to be a mistaken idea, a dangerous idea, a stupid idea. It was Kurt Vonnegut who said somewhere in "Breakfast of Champions," "Never underestimate the power of bad ideas." The idea that there are no limits to growth and that humanity can have everything its way, this is not tied necessarily only to capitalism or communism. This is a fundamental human misapprehension about how the universe works. We want to believe that we can have whatever we want. We don't like limits, but unfortunately for us, there are limits.

The failure to respect limits typically comes from failure to be educated in science, technology, engineering, and math. And so if you, if you want to really focus on the cause, my view is that the real cause is that most human beings are completely failed by their society. This is pretty easy to demonstrate. Probably the all-time peak of education in science—let's just call it STEM for short, science, technology engineering and math—was in the post-war period. After the Second World War, America led the way. Its schools at one time were the envy of the whole world. Hard to imagine that

today, but that's the truth. In the 1950s and 60s, American schools were tremendous. Public schools, especially.

Many other countries tried to emulate those actions. And so for a while there, it was pretty normal for the average person—a person of average means, not wealthy, but middle-class or whatever—it was pretty normal for ordinary people to be educated thoroughly in STEM. Today, that is not the case. And so it shouldn't be a surprise that very many people are essentially incapable of critical thinking. You cannot think critically without some background in STEM. It is essential. Essentially humanity has failed in its duty to be not only literate, but numerate. And this is why I think Albert Bartlett—he's dead now—was quite correct when he famously said that humanity's greatest failing was its inability to comprehend the exponential function.

Most people, you talk to them about exponents and their eyes just fucking glaze over. They don't understand logs. They don't understand inverse logs. And if you try to talk to them about it, they get upset. Well, sorry, but that's how population growth works. Population growth is an exponential function, and lots of other things are too. If you want to work, work for a huge financial company and do stock market trading and stuff, then you have to know your logs, but lots of people don't do that. Most people's jobs don't require them to know anything more than simple arithmetic, and they're lucky if they know that. And that's just not good enough. That won't do. And so the question is, how is it that society is failing people? Well, that's a really important question that we ought to be addressing.

And my answer would be that we have to look at the critical period hypothesis. I think that Noam Chomsky and his followers in linguistics were right, but they didn't take it far enough. The critical period hypothesis is fairly narrowly-confined to the development of language. Effectively what it says is that human beings have a defined period during which they are amenable to learning language. Essentially it's an observation of neuroscience. It says that during a certain period, the human brain is being wired for language. It's a neural network and it's being wired. It's not physical wires, but it might as well be, as we now know, from the successes that have been made in developing neural nets in software, especially by Deep Mind and other related corporations, it might as well be actual wires. So human beings are machines, their brains are a kind of biological machinery. And the brain itself is an astonishing computer, vastly in excess in its capabilities of anything human beings can currently produce, but nonetheless predictable. And so its wiring process is understandable and predictable.

And if that process is denied, in other words, if you park children during the critical period in front of the TV or whatever, or ignore them, or God forbid don't engage them in conversation, then what you get is morons, you get people who will grow up with permanent damage. You might as well call it child abuse, because that's what it is. Now I'm a product of the opposite. My parents loved me. I was raised to be intelligent. My parents are hyper-intelligent. And so you better believe that they talked to me, long before it probably even mattered. They talked to me all the time, and they talked to me in a very sophisticated way, as if I were an adult. And that had the expected effect. It made me hyper-articulate.

This is just true. I mean, you just have to accept this. It's like the sun coming up every day. This is how it works. If you want people to grow up to be good citizens, capable of participating in democracy and having a rich ideological life so that they can be communicating in a positive, constructive way, you need to surround them not just with love, you need to surround them with language. But it's much more than

that. It's that the critical period hypothesis, even though it's not formally formulated as such, can be extended to other domains, including critical thinking and math literacy and STEM and all the rest of it. If you don't teach children to be numerate at an early age, they're going to have a tough time learning it later, the same way they will have a tough time learning language at a later date. And so that's the crisis. That's what's happened, is that we've basically failed whole generations of people. And in poorer countries, it was almost everyone who was failed. The essence of a failed country is when the country no longer provides for its citizens in terms of education at all. And so the average person just becomes an imbecile. There's no cure for that. The point is that that's permanent. That's how you get 75 million people voting for Donald Trump. They don't know any better.

And so this is what we have to start facing, is that if we lived in a more just world, the highest paid profession in the world would be teaching. Think about it. The teachers that we give our children to, are responsible for the future. They are determining the future of humanity, by determining what children—during the critical period—will actually be exposed to. You send your kids to a Waldorf school, there's going to be trouble. Instead of studying STEM and reading the classics, they're going to be sitting around gazing at their navels and playing musical instruments and so on. Well maybe Rudolf Steiner thought that was a great idea, but Rudolf Steiner was a moron. Rudolph Steiner believed that he was walking around in the spirit world and talking to the spirits.

He might as well have been Joseph Smith, the founder of the Mormon religion. He was a dangerous moron with stupid, dangerous ideas. Sorry, but Steiner-ism is a cult. And yet that cult exists today and is allowed to run schools for children. And so you better believe that all the children who go to those schools are getting a kind of brain damage. This is what we need to start facing. I know it's not polite, but I'm in good company. I'm with Richard Dawkins. I don't feel bad about insulting people's religion because religion is fucking insane. I don't have any problem saying in the public sphere that religion is a bunch of fairy tales. And to the extent that humanity continues to believe those fairy tales, we're absolutely fucked and we're going to go extinct.

That's normal for me because I come from a background where that's a normal belief. When you hang around with engineers and scientists, that's just normal. We don't waste a lot of time discussing religion because that's just ludicrous. In the world of science and engineering, we expect things to be proved. In other words, our lives revolve every day around struggling with reality. We don't waste time arguing whether reality is real. We don't worry about that. We're actually trying to get things to work. That's the difference. Most people don't feel constrained by having to get things to work. And so they can easily drift off into some absurd dimension where everything is relative. This is the problem with all those French guys, you know, the French relativists, Derrida and the rest of them.

It makes for great movies. I love "The Matrix." I think it's a great movie, but it's not actually real, it's fiction. It's fiction. The actual real reality is what makes your cell phone work. You get it? Your cell phone is fucking real, and the little chips inside there, that's the most astonishing thing humanity has ever accomplished, arguably. Those chips, those are astonishing. If you saw that laid out like a city or something, it would be the size of Berlin. It's a monumental achievement. It takes lifetimes to make one of those things. I know you think that's crazy, but that's how it works. It takes man-lives. You get hundreds of guys working for years, and then you get something that complicated.

But those guys don't worry about whether reality is real, because they're struggling with reality every day. They're struggling to make predictive explanations of phenomena. That's what it's all about. And if humanity can't be bothered to get its shit together and make its explanations, and pay attention to the explanations of phenomena that we've already got, that generations of scientists and educators have labored to chip out of solid chaos… The universe is super chaotic, and we've got guys, at least since the Renaissance, who devote their whole lives to chipping out little tiny pieces of how it actually works. It's no longer in dispute. The periodic table, sorry, it's no longer in dispute. You can believe whatever you want, but the periodic table is absolutely real.

It's as real as Pythagoras. When I tell you that A squared plus B squared equals C squared, if you say, I don't believe it, you might as well say the moon is made of cheese. You're not seriously participating in this discussion. Your position is just not tenable, okay? So we have an enormous body of knowledge. We stand on the shoulders of giants. And if we now disregard that knowledge and say, yeah, but we don't care because everything's relative, well, there's a name for that. That's solipsism. Solipsism is where you don't believe that reality is real, or more specifically, you believe that whatever you think is real. That's how we got to Trump. Trump is a solipsist. He wakes up every day and he just says whatever he wants and that's reality for him.

Well, so if that's how we're going to roll, then we won't be around. We'll be extinct. That's all. That's what "Apologize to the Future" is about, that that's a real possibility for us now. That we've just been too stupid to organize ourselves, despite our amazing successes, by the way. I mean, the museums are filled with amazing successes. You go walk through the Museum of Modern Art and there it all is. You walk through the Smithsonian Institute and humanity has done some amazing stuff. We're really good. In fact, we're the only game in town. What else would you have? Like I said, you want planet of the squirrels? Cause that's what you're going to get. Good luck with that, you know, it's going to be pretty boring. So what does it all come down to? It comes down to this. If humanity can't get its shit together, if we insist on listening to Jesus instead of scientists, and we just make ourselves extinct, well, it was worth a try, right? At least it wasn't boring, but it's still a tragedy. That's the point, is that it's tragic, because in fact there was nothing else here on Earth that was interesting. It's a shame, if the most interesting thing that ever happened on Earth, can't get its shit together enough to survive even another fucking hundred years. I mean that's pretty dramatic. And yet that's what it's looking like.

It's not capitalism's fault. It's neoliberalism's fault. That's an important distinction.

Of course I find it interesting. But what I find more interesting is the pictures from the Hubble telescope. But I think most people take those pictures for granted and don't understand their importance. What you should feel when you see the pictures that came back from the Hubble telescope is a feeling of reverence. You should feel awe. It should be awe-inspiring to grasp how vast the universe actually is. You literally need a background in STEM to grasp how big it is, because if you don't understand exponents and you don't know what scientific notation is—if you don't know how to express numbers in scientific notation at least—then you can't grasp it. It's way too many zeros. It's that big. And so I think most people don't really have a clear sense, not only of the macro, but also the micro. So the macro is the astronomical scale, and it's really hard to comprehend. You're getting into very large exponents. But the micro is just as scary and strange. Now with our supercomputers, we're getting down to individual nanoseconds, we're increasingly building devices at nanoscale, meaning we're getting down towards the

wavelength of light. It's hard for most people to comprehend how small those things are, or how fast they are. It's very hard to grasp how small an electron really is, or what it is, and yet it's important that we grasp this. It should give us something that it's apparently not doing, which is a sense of seriousness, a sense of purpose!

People are jerking off at just the moment when we need to get real. You understand? That's why "A Thin Layer of Oily Rock" says, one of the lines is "So we better get real / While we still can / It don't mean a thing / Except maybe to us." That's from "A Thin Layer of Oily Rock," I'm quoting. It's an existential scientific pragmatism anthem. That's what it is. And it's super-important that people understand the seriousness of what's happened. We have become self-aware in an eye blink on the geological timescale, and it's been a terrible, terrifying journey, including things like mass slaughter, Auschwitz, unimaginable things, toxic pollution, the Superfund sites, nuclear war, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, just unimaginable horror, but there's also been unimaginable beauty and greatness. And I defy anyone to deny that. Stand there in one of the great achievements, inside one of our more beautiful cathedrals or buildings or in a museum, and deny that there has been good that's come from all this. It's been a very complicated, messy experiment that we're conducting with intelligence here. And it's all about to end if we don't shape up. And what shaping up means is getting serious. Taking responsibility for the future. That's what it is about. If we don't take responsibility for the future, we won't have one. I don't think that's hard to understand. And I think that it's shocking that most people are so reluctant to face that. I face it every day. If I blame people for anything, I blame them for not taking the future seriously enough.

Well, but you know what I'm going to say right off the bat. The first thing I'm going to say is if you seriously confront the future, if you face it, honestly, the first thing you're going to do is take a lifetime vow of non-procreation. The second thing you're going to do is become a vegan. And after you get done with those two, then we can talk about what else. The rest of it won't really matter. All that much.

The rest of it's all in the fine print. Look, if you want to recycle bottles and stuff, you go ahead, but it makes no difference. That's not going to impact the future. And there's a good, simple reason for that. The reason the Church of Euthanasia focused on procreation primarily is because procreation—here we go with the STEM stuff again—procreation has logarithmic effects, exponential effects.

So you say, well, I'm only going to have two. Sure, great. And then it turns out that despite all your efforts to turn your two offspring into progressive, liberal, open-minded, STEM-loving, super-intelligent guys, whoops you fucked it up and they turn into Mormons. And so they have huge families, and boom, before you know it, you've created this enormous pyramid of humanity moving forward into the future, long after you're dead. That consequence vastly eclipses any amount of reduction in consumption that you could have accomplished in your own personal life. You just couldn't recycle enough bottles to even begin to offset the damage that you did by setting that chain of events into motion. That is why we focus on procreation: because procreation is not linear, unlike consumption reduction for individuals, which is linear. You consume a certain amount, you reduce it a certain amount, that's linear, but population is non-linear. You got it?

You don't control what your children do. You think you do. You'd like to think you do, but you don't. And you certainly don't control what their children do. And so the best way that you can impact the future is

by not making more humans, because there just isn't any problem that humanity is currently facing that adding more humans will help us solve. We are already failing the vast majority of humans. And when I say that I'm being specific, it's like this. So fully half of the world's population today, now, lives on less than $10 a day. Okay? Probably a solid third of humanity lives on $2 a day or less, and goes to bed hungry pretty much every night. They are the abject poor, the absolute poor living in slums, living in favelas, struggling every day, just to get enough calories to survive. Their children get brain damage. Do you understand? From malnutrition, not just from being ignored. They'd be happy to be parked in front of a TV in some American suburb and at least getting enough to eat. Their brains would still be damaged, by neglect, but at least they wouldn't be getting malnutrition. This is how much we failed humanity. We have failed on a massive scale to provide for the humans we've already got. And so you explain to me how adding more is going to help that. You can't and you won't. There is no explanation. It's just fucking crazy. And so what it really comes down to is selfishness. And I have no patience with that. I have no patience with people who pretend to seize the high ground and talk about how their children are going to be so special and wonderful, when what they really are is selfish.

They just want to go through the process. We have this all the time, people say, but it's the most important thing you've ever done with your life, and you can't even really say you're an adult until you've had children, and blah, blah, blah. This is all just selfishness. It's disregard for the future, and selfishness. And so I have no patience with it. That's why we use it as a litmus test for the Church of Euthanasia. If you really care about the future, the first thing, and the only thing we oblige you to do is to put your money where your mouth is and not procreate. The rest of it is optional. Even veganism, though it's crucial and important, is still only affecting your consumption. That's still only linear.

Are you going to ask me if the Church of Euthanasia is pro-COVID? You better not! That's not polite. Of course I'm not going to say that. That would be rude. Look, a quarter of a million people already died just in the United States. That's not polite. So, we're not going to say that, that would be really disrespectful. But what I am going to say is that it's not significant in terms of human population discussions. We're still adding what? More than 80 million people per year. Isn't that right? So believe it, even if it got as bad as the Spanish flu—and so far, there's no sign of that—estimates vary between 12 and 50 million people died over quite a few years, it's still not enough to change the trend. It'll make a lot of people super sad. A lot of people will lose loved ones. I know people who already lost loved ones. My father lost lots of friends to COVID. He's old. It will be a lot of heartache and suffering, but it's not going to save humanity from climate chaos. Get real here. Come on. I mean, it's just not. The main force that's determining climate chaos is the developing nations.

China now has a billion and a half people. India has a billion easy. South Asia has a lot too. They're growing. And they're the main customers for fossil carbon. They're the main customers for copper and everything else that humans need. They're developing at a ferocious scale. They're buying up huge chunks of Africa to use the farm land and they're securing access to fresh water. They are going to determine what happens in the future, not Americans and certainly not Germans or Italians or Spanish people. In many parts of Europe, population growth is negative. It has been for a while. The problem that I have is I'm mostly only reaching people in countries where people have already apparently absorbed the message for one reason or another, because the population growth is already falling. If this message were translated into Chinese or Hindi, it might do more good.

So what do you say to that? Should we feel good about ourselves because we're actually winning? We're not winning. That's the thing. We're not winning. We're still doing most of the consuming. China's catching up. India is catching up and they're burning a lot of coal and that sucks, but we're still burning it. And there's also the whole historical issue, right? The Americans like to point their fingers and say, well now it's China that's causing the problem, so stop talking about us. Well, actually there's America's and Europe's historical emissions. Most of the existing CO2 in the atmosphere came from America and Europe, from their industrial revolution. So it's actually not correct for us to just deflect and say it's not our problem, especially because most of our shit is being made in China. So there's that too right? Who is consuming all this stuff that China's making. It's mostly Europeans and Americans. Great.

So in fact, there's enough blame to go around. There's blame on all sides. It's a human problem, and in general, the developed countries are probably more to blame. It's hard to blame, you know, islands in the Pacific, right? They don't really output much CO2. It's hard to really blame them. No, but we can blame modern developed humans for not organizing themselves.

Ultimately, what are we asking people to do? We're asking them to agree. Well, that's the one thing, apparently humans are terrible at. It's like herding cats. You say everybody should agree about this, and you're just guaranteeing that they won't. People can really only seem to be able to agree about things that don't matter. So everybody can agree that Gangnam Style was a great video. Well, that doesn't help us, does it? Everybody can agree that cute cats are fun to watch on the internet. I saw some statistics showing what percentage of the internet's bandwidth was being utilized for cute cats. It was pretty surprisingly big. I thought to myself, well, maybe the Church of Euthanasia had it all wrong, and actually what we should do is attach our message to cute cat videos.

It's a serious proposal. We might get more mileage that way then by making somber videos about overpopulation and sea level rise, like the "Overshoot" video. The "Overshoot" video is a case in point. I spent a lot of time and money on that. That was an expensive video to make. And if you've seen it, I think you can understand why. That was all done by hand. That's not digital magic, that's guys making little models and stuff. It took like six months to do that. And a lot of money and time and care. And so now it's at 12,000 views on YouTube. Okay. So there are sharks, individual sharks with millions and millions of views on YouTube.

So what did the shark do to justify that? It's just a shark swimming around in the ocean, but it's popular as fuck. What can you do? Yeah. I noticed the other day that the song "Rhythm of the Night," the video for that had 181 million views. And that's not high by YouTube standards. So clearly the Church of Euthanasia is not winning. Our propaganda needs an overhaul. We are not winning on YouTube or anywhere else. And why is that? It's because we're saying something that's not cute cats. We're saying something that's extremely pessimistic and negative. We're asking people to confront their own extinction. Who wants to do that? No one. People would rather be told that it's all going to be good, that everything is great. That we're going to the happy place after we die. And everything happens for a reason. And if bad things happen to other people, that's because they deserve it.

In this sense, neoliberalism really is a hard formula to compete with. What neoliberalism says closely dovetails with what new age religions say. New age religions encourage everybody to believe in karma. So the idea is that if bad stuff happens, it's for a reason, it's because either the other people did

something bad, or you did something bad to deserve it. If you get sick, it's because you deserve it, in extreme form. Christian scientists don't even believe in doctoring or medicine or anything like that. No, because you know, if you're a good person, then God will save you. Oh, great. Super. All right. So that's what people want to believe.

They want to believe that there's justice and that everything is magical. Magical thinking. And it's become abundantly clear that there's good evolutionary reasons for this. It would appear that in our original evolutionary environment—a super violent past, when we were surviving just barely by our wits and always in danger of getting our arms and legs torn off by giant mammals—it was a lot easier to survive psychologically, if your brother gets eaten by a lion, to believe that he didn't actually die in agonizing pain, that actually his spirit went to the happy place. And so you're going to see him soon. Great. Well, I can understand that. I can understand that that would have been an evolutionarily selected attribute. It's just super unhelpful at this time, because at the moment, we're not wandering around on the Savannah.

We're confronting the reality of 8 billion people trying to survive through vast technological systems, which are totally under our own control. So it's not helpful to believe in magic at the moment. In fact, there's only one thing that is helpful at the moment, and that's for us to be hyper-rational, which is the one thing that humans hate to do. You know, they hate it like the plague. I can't tell you how many friends I have, you start talking to them about rationality and facts, and they say, oh but you know, sorry, that's all so negative. You know, because like everything's relative. And, you know, what my meditation teacher says is just as valid as that. No, it isn't! Your meditation teacher is totally full of shit. Are you kidding? Ayurveda is full of shit. Sorry, but Traditional Chinese medicine almost killed me.

Traditional Chinese medicine is little better than witchcraft. You might as well put leeches on people. The only reason the Chinese communist government agreed to it is because they have other problems. And so if traditional Chinese medicine makes their population easier to manage, they don't care. If people want to believe that eating bear paws gives them sexual virility, it's better than having them believe that overthrowing the Chinese communist leaders is going to make for a better society. They'd rather have bears go extinct than have that. And so that's how it works in China. Guys basically murder all these nearly extinct animals and eat their parts, and believe in magic.

That's like in the old days in aboriginal societies, you eat your enemy's brain, because it's going to make you as powerful as your enemy. It's actually a great way to get horrible diseases. But people didn't know that. They didn't know that diseases were real. I don't know how many times I have to tell people. It was only until the very late 19th century that people actually admitted that bacteria were real. Go see this famous series about the Charité hospital in Berlin. It's a pseudo history, but it's close enough to being real. The truth was that the people who ran the Charité hospital, their attitude was that if you die, it's because God meant for you to die. Great. Just what you want your doctors and nurses to believe.

And they had guys like Robert Koch say no, actually it's these little microscopic things. Yeah. I know you can't see them. I know they're invisible. You've got to look through my microscope to see them. And they're all like, that's not how God's plan works. Great. How many people died because of that? Because people just couldn't accept that, no, it's not God's plan, it's because of these little microscopic things and they're actually fucking real. So now people accept that. Most people would get pretty upset if their

doctor wiped his ass with his hands before he sticks them inside your gut. Today, we accept that that's not acceptable behavior, but during the civil war in America, for example, it was normal. There was no attempt to disinfect. They didn't accept that that was necessary. And so if they did any surgery on you, you got sepsis and you died. Well, that's just fucking crazy. But that's how people are. They don't like reality. Reality is scary and weird. That's what the Hubble telescope shows us, to come back to that. What the Hubble telescope shows us is that most of the universe is scary and weird, and you wouldn't want to be anywhere fucking near it. If you got even close to a black hole, you'd be obliterated instantly.

And yet that's our reality. You know, it's out there. Most of the universe is filled with either nothing—meaning dust, barely any dust drifting through a vacuum—or it's filled with plasma, exploding plasma. Plasma is gas that's heated so much that it's just hard for human beings to comprehend how hot it is. It's as hot as the surface of the sun. And so if you were anywhere fucking near it, you'd just turn into a cinder instantly. That's what the universe looks like. It's a super scary, crazy, hostile, enormous place and humanity—our whole existence, our museums, our music, our culture, our books, our webcams, and our podcasts are occurring on a little tiny dot. That's what "A Thin Layer of Oily Rock" says. In one of the first verses, it says "To a tiny dot / In exploding chaos." That's what Earth is: the pale blue dot, just like Carl Sagan said. I should've said pale blue dot, but whatever, it's close enough, we're a tiny dot, and we better get some humility about that. Otherwise it ain't going to be our dot anymore.

This rant that I just gave you for the last hour, that's post-antihumanism. Post-antihumanism is the realization that it's pointless at this [late stage] to attack humanity, that misanthropy is increasingly pointless because humanity is sinking. It's like kicking a [drowning] guy. It's like the Titanic sinking. Everybody's in the water, freezing their asses off, and there's not enough lifeboats and guys are definitely going to die. And so now what? We're going to laugh at them and say, you dumb fucks, it's your own fault? What's the point of that? We're going to humiliate people and immiserate them while they're already humiliated and miserable? You know, it's just pointless. It's pointless cruelty.

Humanity is in deep, deep shit, and so increasingly there's just no time to waste. It's too urgent a problem. If we lived in a just world, in a sensible, rational world, the president of the United States would get on TV and he would say, look, it's like this, I know COVID is bad, and lots of terrible stuff has happened, and the economy is miserable, and it's like the great depression, but we've got more serious problems. This is low on our list of problems. It's as if an asteroid were coming straight for Earth and it's going to kill all life on Earth. And we're all like, yeah, but that's not really happening because I read some shit on the internet that says that that's just a hoax. And actually I'm busy watching Netflix right now, can we talk about this some other time? That's the reality, is that people are absolutely clueless. It's happening in slow motion, and so it's easy to dismiss it, but it might as well be the asteroid headed straight for Earth.

And so the honest president would get on TV and he'd say, I know that this is a stretch. I know it's hard for you guys to grasp this, but we need to mobilize the entire world to deal with this threat. Otherwise we're just not going to have a future on Earth. We would talk about humanity's purpose. There would be discussion by the governments of the world. Believe it or not, there is such a discussion. If you look closely, you will find in the UN charter, you'll find discussion of keeping Earth habitable indefinitely for the benefit of all of all future generations. It's spelled out in an annex that was added to the Rio agreement. The Rio agreement was from 1992, but there was an annex added just a couple of years ago

[The Future We Want, 2012]. They actually specifically spelled out that human beings have the right to a habitable Earth in perpetuity, or for as long as it's possible. So we would talk about that. The leaders of the world would get on TV, and talk about that, and say, sorry about all that crazy stuff we said before, but now we're going to get real because otherwise we're all going to be dead.

See any signs of that? If we see some signs of that, wake me up. It's like this, you know what the Keeling curve is, right? The Keeling curve is the measurement of CO2. It's been going on since the 1950s. So wake me up when that measurement even plateaus. Last year, it was bigger than ever. The jump was bigger than any year before. As long as that keeps going up, we're fucked. We're headed straight for catastrophe. We're speeding up. That's the point. That's what my slide show—the "Overshoot" slide show—tries to show. It tries to show the seriousness of how quickly we're accelerating into oblivion. And it's not because everybody wakes up in the morning and thinks, I want to exterminate humanity. It's not like that. It's because people, most of them just don't know any better. Remember, half the world is on $10 a day or less. They don't have any time for this. They're not going to hear your podcast.

They're struggling just to stay alive. And then there's the subset of them that aren't doing too well at that. They have malnutrition. Whatever they think, they're certainly not focused on the long-term future of humanity. This whole conversation we're having is really only for the intelligentsia in the developed countries, basically what's left of the middle-class. I don't know if super-rich people listen to your podcast. Probably not. I think they probably have their own podcasts. Who knows what they say? Whatever Elon Musk wants them to hear. So whatever's left of the middle-class, ordinary people who got some decent education and are paying off their student loans, those are the guys who are listening to your podcast. What are they supposed to do about all this? Well, like we said, they could start by taking it seriously, and taking it seriously would mean at least not contributing to the problem by adding more people. That's what it says right there in "Apologize to the Future": "How dare you breed? / It's nothing but greed / No doubt your kids / Will thank you well / For turning Earth / Into living hell."

Not what you expected to hear, is it?

Well, that's good. I'm really actually happy to hear that. I prefer it too. I think that the old [Church] was a little bit too taking the piss. I mean, in its own defense, the old Church had its roots in what we used to call in the nineties "high weirdness by mail," which was a term that Fact Sheet Five coined to describe the crazy underground world of zines. So the Church started as a zine, and the zine world was really chaotic and very punk. Or shall we say post-punk. One of our main competitors for attention in that world was the Church of the SubGenius. And so, you know, I'm not saying that we copied them, not even close, but we were influenced by them, and they appreciated us, and there was a kind of detente.

The Church of the SubGenius is an example of the kind of thing that thrived in that world. There was a lot of "slack" and there was a lot of craziness and just sort of trying to push the boundaries. As an artist, I've been described as enfant terrible. And I think that that's accurate. I think that certainly in the early stages, it was right to put me in a show with Tracy Emin. I was in that category. I think that the women who curated Transsexual Express understood that about me and about my work, that it was transgressive, is the word I'm looking for.

That's important and it was a sensible tactic and at the time, it was also something that I really felt I needed to do, but that's more than 20 years ago. I don't feel the need to do that again or to keep doing it. And there would be no point to keep doing it. Some things that you can only do once. I mean, you can't make "I Like to Watch" twice. The conditions that made it appropriate at the time, no longer exist. So now it's just a curious historical artifact. We have to continue to adapt to the future. And that's the essence of situationism. You can't just keep using the same tactics while the situation is changing. So I've adapted my tactics and I feel that my tactics now are very much grounded in realism, scientific pragmatism, and in the pressing urgency of confronting the facts. In my view, the real enemy today is solipsism. The notion that everyone is entitled to their own facts, to their own reality. I don't agree with that, and I fight that. I fight with my last breath against that. I feel that's an honorable cause. I would prefer to spend most of my time composing classical music and studying music theory and tinkering with my nifty polymeter sequencer. But I'm roused from my dogmatic slumber, as Kant said.

It's necessary for people to step up and tell it like it is, because apparently our leaders aren't up to the task. And, if not them, then who? Somebody has to say it, somebody has to say the unsayable, and the unsayable is that failure is now a very real possibility. It is in fact already occurring on a monumental scale. We are losing. And if we want to save the situation, we have to act very quickly. So "Apologize to the Future" is like the life vest being tossed into the water, as we're all drowning. You'd better put it on and you'd better not argue. We haven't got time left for that. We haven't got time left, as I said, for counting angels, we need to get with the program and start confronting the consequences of our previous misdeeds, of which there are many.

I'd like it to be a more cheerful message, but I don't see how it can be.

But it's a start. We have to settle for what we can get. I don't speak Chinese and I'm not invited by the Chinese communist party to address the people of China, nor will I likely be anytime soon, but there are things that could be done that would help, and I've asked for help and not gotten it. And I'm disappointed. I think that "Apologize to the Future" could have legs still. And of course you're helping and I appreciate it. I think that just for starters, Greta Thunberg could help. Do you happen to know her personally?

Oh, I see. You know, if I knew someone who knew Greta Thunberg, I'd ask them to play this record for her. All she'd have to do is blog about it and we'd be getting somewhere. There's no fairness in the system. If you look at what's popular on the social media platforms like Instagram and YouTube and so on, there's no justice in that. There's a lot of luck involved. Sometimes something that deserves to be well-known actually becomes well-known, but most of the time what's well known is stuff that's just crazy and stupid. And you and I aren't going to change that. So we have to work with the system as it is. I like to say, we have to play the ball from where it is, not from where we'd like it to be. That's more realism. The ball is where it is. And so we need to figure out a way to try and make progress from here. And so that means reaching out to people that we actually have some hope of influencing. And I've tried, I've tried a lot and it's a very tiring, taxing effort because I don't get much success with that. People are tired and distracted and depressed and oppressed by COVID and the economic failures that come with that. It's not an easy time to reach people.

I hope it works for you. I hope your audience is receptive to it. I mean, if it doesn't just tell me and we can delete it and start over. I'm sure that's what we should do. We should delete it and start over. And instead we should talk about trends in modern art and cute cats.